

# Camp Millbrook Hoop Hothouse

By Lois Martin

As the Marshfield Fair is heralding the harvest of summer about one mile away the seeds are being planted for a winter crop of basketball stars.

Come August, Camp Millbrook is converted into a full training school with but one purpose — good basketball.

The courts are filled with dribblers and shooters, ranging from the high school ages of the Red Auerbach Basketball Camp to the college crowd to the almighty basketballing — the Celtics.

And there's no small thrill in living in the town that's party to the evolution, the evaluation and the constant prognostication of the success of those tall, slim men.

Truth is, I've been in a little town where Celtics trained before. Remember the 50s and Cousy, Easy Ed and Brannum?

Well, years ago they trained in Ellsworth, Maine when and where I was a lot younger. It was during school time and we spent hours peeking through the gym window at the heroes. We made an honest effort to appear unimpressed, nonchalant about their being in our school. We failed.

Occasionally we were thrust into speaking to them directly, on business. I remember answering a phone call in the principal's office, requiring Bob Brannum to come to the phone. I alerted "Mr. Brannum" to his call, all the while desperately pretending I had aplomb and was not vulnerable to schoolgirl flutterings at the very sight of a Celtic.

And I'm not above seeing them now, this year's crop in training. Bob Brannum directs Camp Millbrook, coaches at Brandeis University and is unerringly tied to the Celtics seasonal training.

Red Auerbach's hair's no longer Red, but he still carries the same old cigar. And Howie McHugh, part of the Celtics organization since before Ellsworth, manages to concentrate on some earnest fishing at the pond when the dribbling slows down.

That's not often during training. There on the courts are a stunning array of high basketball sneakers, predominantly Converse All-Stars, with a few Adidas, and Ponys thrown in. High white striped socks, the Bird wears two pairs, are part of the basic uniform where rookies and hopefuls play their hearts out in quest of a membership in the Celtics Club.

I know how they play the game, essentially. In fact I am constrained to say the Ellsworth High School squad won two successive state championships during the same time the Celtics practiced in that town. But what I don't understand is the sophisticated semantics behind the gain and loss of players, the stupefying amounts of money behind the negotiations, the game within the game.

So when I see those men of heights that so capture the attention of Celtics fans, it is with a different eye, based on my naivete in the big sports world.

Lawrence Bird, therefore, appears to me not like a Golden God from Indiana State, but like a very tall young man with a shock of blond hair, blue eyes and a wisp of a moustache that his mother probably condones.

The Bird says he was about 15 when he discovered he could play basketball. That's what he and the Celtics have in common right off the bat, a mutual discovery.

And for every move he made on the court, there were corresponding critiques offered by spectators. He's not necessarily in an enviable position. He got the money and now he's got the pressure. Thousands of season tickets have been purchased on the strength of his presence. And that's a lot of responsibility even for someone who becomes a superstar before he becomes a professional.

Michael Leon Carr (M.L.), from an unapprised point of view, is a good-looking man who bears the countenance of a gentleman. Now that's a weak foundation on which to place championship aspirations. But The Bird says Carr's the fastest thing going on the court in addition to having shooting prowess. Carr matches complimentary phrases with his new teammate.

And every woman knows behind the likes of Rick Robey, there's got to be a proud mother. There is. She, her husband, and three daughters are what Rick calls his "biggest fans."

He's 6 foot 11 inches, a good-looking fellow of 23 years with a wife named Chris. They're newlyweds who've built a home in Hingham, I understand. And Rick's enthusiastic about Boston.

He says, in speaking of success, "You can achieve anything you really want to." But he believes the ones who get where they want to go have separated themselves from follow. They are their own leaders, driving themselves with constant practice, working on the little things to make the big time.

At Camp Millbrook last week all the males were working toward that. Wilson balls and damp tee-shirts went up and down the court in a maelstrom of purpose. Those who no longer were in training, trained others or offered advice on both.

Basketball's the word in August. Watchers are inspired to place the dream of supremacy back on its green and white shamrock.

There on the sidelines was David Cowens, with boyish face and blue and white flowered shirt at once a star and a spectator reviewing the new beginnings.

And we who are parents of youngsters, who see the stars as immortal, sagely endorse the right of any young man to have unlimited access to his own hoop and his own shower. Hometown youths could do worse than to admire achievement and ability. And heroes have historically been generous about sharing the glow of stardom.

During their time here the Celtics have scrimmaged at Marshfield High School, lending themselves to the adulation and affection of young people. It is for that, the stars' accessibility and graciousness, we can admire them. We need no guarantee they'll be magnificent during the season. They've already been successful in pre-season Marshfield by honoring the heritage of hope only heroes can inspire in our youths.

## PATCHES

## Musings

By John Henry Cutler

Spare me from the guy who after you say you are glad to meet him, says, "Same Here."

Some psychiatrist remind me of a fireman who turned his hose on the hydrant.

If you see a suspicious person or car in your neighborhood, call the police. South Shore police officers would much rather check out a false alarm than be called after a crime has been committed.

How can an honest man steal a towel from a motel which has this warning on the desk: LOVE IS leaving the towels here when you leave.

Bad luck comes in threes, good luck comes in ones.

Nobody can buy Mayor Kevin White, but almost anyone can sell him.

Long-winded politicians should take the advice of fan dancers: Cover the subject only enough to make it tantalizing.

Whether he is paying for water over the dam or a dam over water, the taxpayer gets soaked.

All some women need to look like a perfect ruin is a little ivy.

## Boat Course

### View Better

The course of the 1979 Plymouth-South Shore 200 Power Boat Race at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 8 had been changed to provide better public viewing from the shore and boats. Although the race has been lengthened to 200 kilometers, the course has been brought closer shore.

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